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RESETTLEMENT POSSIBILITIES IN TRANSJORDAN

I. SHORT-TERM PROJECTS

It was announced on April 13th that His Majesty's Government proposed to make an interest-free loan of 1 million pounds to the Transjordan Government to enable it to undertake immediately certain development projects which would have the effect of making possible the resettlement of some of the Arab refugees in Transjordan.

Three short-term projects of a minor nature had already been worked out and are now about to be put in hand. These are:

(a) Irrigation projects on 9 of the perennial streams running into the Jordan.

One such project (on the Wadi el Arab) had been completed just before the loan was granted. In addition, there are two small schemes for irrigation by means of pumps, one at Azraq, using the water from springs situated there (1380 acres), the other on the left bank of the Jordan (1150 acres).

H. M. Minister at Amman has estimated that all these schemes will cost £P 315,000. This sum includes only the cost of the headworks for the 9 perennial streams projects and of clearing the land at Azraq and on the left bank and generally making it fit for agriculture. It does not take into account resettlement costs. The intention is that, in the earlier stages at least, settlers would live in tents or under some other form of temporary shelter. About 25 dunums (5.75 acres) would be allotted to each family (5 persons). No draft animals would be required.

It is not yet possible to give a firm estimate of the number of settlers for whom these schemes will provide. First estimates of from 20-30,000 are likely to prove very over-optimistic.

(b) The resettlement of refugees on about 62,000 acres of rain-fed land in the Ma'an area.

The intention is to settle the largest possible number of families, and it is thought that a lot viable of about 57 acres per family will be sufficient. If, as is hoped, 1350 families can thus be provided for, at a cost of £P 500 per family (to cover the purchase of a house, an underground cistern, implements, seeds, ploughing animals and a few sheep), the scheme would provide for about 6750 settlers at a total cost of about £P 675,000.

One of the problems which is likely to arise is the settlement

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of claims by certain tribes to the land in question and allowance will have to be made for the purchase of grazing rights.

(c) The construction of water-holes for sheep in grazing areas, by means of which it is hoped to double the sheep population of Transjordan.

Costs are difficult to estimate since each water-hole must be designed to fit the wadi in which it is built. The average cost of each water-hole might however be LP 550. The construction unit comprising a bull-dozer, etc., would cost about LP 8000 and interest on the capital expenditure on this item, plus loss on resale, would have to be taken into account. Water-holes could be constructed at the rate of about 20 per year, with a single construction unit. The balance of the L 1 million loan would cover the construction of 17 or 18 holes.

II. LONG-TERM PROJECTS

JORDAN - YARMUK CANALIZATION PROJECT

(a) Description of project.

Mr. M. G. Ionides, formerly Development Commissioner to the Mandatory Government of Transjordan, prepared a Report on the Water Resources of Transjordan and their Development in 1938, in which he recommended that a major irrigation project, involving the canalization of the waters of the Jordan and the Yarmuk, was practicable. Mr. G. Walpole, the present Director of Lands and Surveys in Transjordan, has prepared a rough estimate of the cost of this scheme and the numbers who might be settled as a result of it. Mr. Walpole assumes intensive cultivation would be developed as a result of the project and that all the owned land in the Jordan Valley would be purchased from its present owners and redistributed as holdings of 25 dunums (5.75 acres) per family of 5 on cultivation leases. Half the mean annual discharge of the Jordan and Yarmuk rivers would be utilized for the full development of the project.

On this basis Mr. Walpole estimates that the project could provide for the settlement of about 40,000 refugees. (It is assumed that this figure represents the maximum number who could be resettled on an economic basis. Previous estimates of 100,000 probably represent the maximum number who could be resettled regardless of cost).

Mr. Walpole estimates the total cost as follows:

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Cost of expropriation	£1,891,600
Canalization of the Jordan and the Yarmuk	7,500,000
Diversion of the Yarmuk winter floods into Lake Tiberias for use in the summer	500,000
Housing of 8000 families at £ 300 per house	2,400,000
Purchase of implements and ploughing animals at £ 100 per family	800,000
Anti-malaria work	50,000
Unforeseen expenditure	250,000
TOTAL	13,391,600

Mr. Walpole points out that the Jordan Valley is climatically particularly well situated for the production of special crops (vegetables and fruit) which can be placed on the market much earlier than similar crops grown elsewhere and therefore bring in higher prices. If such crops are developed in the Jordan Valley it should be possible to charge cultivators there higher rents than are paid elsewhere. He recommends that the loan or loans which will be required to finance the project should be raised on the security of the land and repaid from the revenue that will accrue from the cultivators' rents. He estimates that the annual revenue from rent might amount to £ 750,000, while the annual cost of maintenance might be about £ 250,000, thus leaving an annual balance for payment of interest and annual payments into a sinking fund of £ 500,000. On this basis, it would take the Transjordan Government some 30 years to repay the loan.

Mr. Walpole recommends that a Jordan Valley Authority should be set up to administer the project. The Authority would lay down crop policy and market the produce. Details of its constitution and functions remain to be considered.

(b) Appointment of an Irrigation Survey.

Meanwhile, the Transjordan Government have decided to appoint the British engineering firm of Sir Murdoch MacDonald & Partners to prepare a preliminary survey of constructional works for this project. This will take 3 months and cost about £ 5,500 to £ 6,000. The firm could then be further engaged for the preparation of detailed designs and estimates and subsequently as contractors for the works. Before any action can be taken by Transjordan on this project, however, it will be

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necessary for her first to reach an agreement with the Government of Israel regarding the use of the waters, for, since the Israeli frontier runs for some distance down the centres of the rivers, the waters belong equally to both States. Agreements with Syria and the Lebanon will probably also be necessary, since the head waters of the Jordan are in both countries and the Yarmuk has its source in Syria.

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RESETTLEMENT POSSIBILITIES IN SYRIA

Syria's capacity for immediate absorption of refugees (which was in any case very limited) has probably now been fully used up.

The Jezira.

2. There are estimated however to be about 1 3/4 million acres of cultivable waste land in the Jezira area. The land is largely rain-fed and requires only men and machinery to get it into production. The three most fertile zones are thought to be (a) the Khabur el Byed (b) the district North-East of Hassetche (c) Tel Kotchek.

Numbers who might be resettled.

3. Our estimates (further details of which are given in Annex A) show that the area might well absorb between 100,000 and 245,000 persons, depending on the area assumed to be cultivable and the degree of mechanization proposed. It is thought however that it would be unwise to plan on the basis of resettling more than 150,000 persons. One of the difficulties in making these estimates is that it is uncertain how much of the land shown as "cultivable waste" in the Syrian Government's official statistics has a high enough rate of rainfall to allow for resettlement. A large part of the 1,796,000 acres shown as cultivable may lie in the low rainfall area.

Communications.

4. Any extensive resettlement will depend, moreover, on the development of road and rail communications both within the Jezira area and between that area and the West.

Problems involved in resettlement.

5. It would probably be best for settlement in the Jezira to be based on a combination of mechanized and animal agriculture. It may however prove impossible at first to buy sufficient ploughing animals. Small-holdings would be unsuitable. The area is ripe for large-scale farming on an organized basis. A great opportunity is thus presented for establishing cooperative forms of ownership and management, perhaps on the same lines as those which have proved so successful in the Sudan.

6. In theory the greater part of the land is State domain or Government-owned. Owing to the distance away from the central

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Government, uncontrolled land acquisition by certain tribes and important sheikhs has however taken place. It may prove very difficult to upset their claims which, in the unsettled state of the Jezira, cannot be ignored.

7. Unless resettlement is accompanied by instruction and advice in regard to crop rotation, the use of fertilizers, etc., the area will revert to waste land.

Cost of resettlement.

8. At a very rough guess, the initial outlay involved in resettlement is estimated as follows:

Surveys	£50,000
Tents (it is assumed that the settlers will gradually build their own homes)	£400,000
Wells, etc.	£50,000
Tractors (1000 for 1 million acres)	
Farm machinery	£900,000 or)
Farm animals	£1,400,000)
Motor transport	£100,000
Unforeseen contingencies	£200,000
Total	£1,700,000 to £2,100,000

9. It is considered that the Syrian Government would be unable to make any part of the cost available from its own resources and that the total would have to be supplied from outside sources.

Road and rail construction.

10. Roads.

There are fair-weather roads or some form of track connecting Deir-ez-Zor with Raqqa, Meskeneh and Aleppo (318 kms) and joining Deir-ez-Zor with Hassetche, Qamichliye and the North (232 kms.). Roads from Raqqa to Tel Abiad (90 kms.), from Hassetche to Ras-el-Ain (85 kms.), from Qamichliye to Ain Divar and Tel Kotchek (about 90 kms.) and from

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and from Mayadine to Abou Kemal (91 kms.) would probably be essential. The total length of roads required would no doubt be at least 600 kms. In 1947 it was estimated that the cost of building secondary roads would be about LS 30,000 per km. (roughly £ 3,333 sterling). Annual maintenance costs would be at least £ S 500 per km.

11. Annual estimated costs for the above programme, spread over 5 years, might be summarized as follows:

Capital cost of construction	£ S 3,600,000	- £ 400,000
Capital cost of reconditioning	400,000	- 44,444
Maintenance charges	600,000	- 66,666
Totals	£ S 4,600,000	- £ 511,110

12. The employment of refugees on road construction might provide a valuable form of interior relief works, part of which might be financed by the U.N.R.P.R., in the event of that organization converting its activities from pure relief to works projects and of further funds becoming available.

13. Railways.

The nearest railway line is that at Aleppo, 80 kms. from the river. The N.E. section of the area is traversed by the Mosul-Turkey-Aleppo line at a distance 250 kms. by rail from Aleppo.

14. The following railway lines would be desirable:

(a) from Aleppo to Raqqa (200 kms.)
(b) from Raqqa to Hassetche (180 kms.)
(c) from Hassetche to Tel Kotchek (130 kms.)

15. The costs (at 1947 prices), including locomotives, rolling stock and all the necessary works, were estimated as follows:

(a) LS 26 million excluding a bridge across the Euphrates, costing LS 5 million;
(b) LS 24 million;
(c) LS 20 million.

16. Further lines could be constructed as follows:

(a) from Raqqa to Deir-ez-Zor (150 kms.), costing LS 21 millions;

(b) from

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(b) from Deir-ez-Zor to Abou Kemal (130 kms) costing LS 20 million.

17. The total length would be about 800 kms. This would probably involve the import of about 87,500 tons of steel rail and 1 million sleepers.

Timing of resettlement.

18. It is suggested that, as a first step, a Technical Commission should be sent to the Jezira area to study conditions on the spot. The Commission's work might take 6 months. After that period, settlement might take up to 2 years, although it might be possible to settle some groups before the Commission completed its work. Settlement should start at the time of year when settlers would have the opportunity to establish themselves and take in their first crop.

Other resettlement possibilities in Syria

19. (a) Irrigation settlement on the Khabur River. The Gibb Report recommended the investigation of a canalization scheme which might provide irrigation for 83,000 acres and land for about 60,000 souls, assuming that the land were to be intensively cultivated and depending on the quality of the soil;

(b) Irrigation development in the Euphrates Valley from Meskenech to Raqqa and from Deir-ez-Zor to Abou Kemal. Relatively little capital would be required, for oil-powered 12 inch pumps and the construction of distribution canals and similar minor works. The present population of the Euphrates Valley (about 200,000 in 1947) is sufficient for the cultivation of only about a quarter of the irrigable land on non-intensive farming. Here again road-building must be an essential accompaniment to any development schemes.

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ANNEX A

SETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES IN THE JEZIRA, SYRIA

1st SUPPOSITION - Out of 1,796,000 acres said to be culturable waste only 1,000,000 acres actually cu turable.

I. 1,000,000 acres culturable by tractors.

Allow 20 families per 1,000 acres (This is double that proposed for the Groundnut scheme).

Total families needed = 20 x 1,000 = 20,000

Total persons = 100,000

or:-

II. (a) 750,000 acres by tractors

20 families per 1,000 acres

Families required = 20 x 750 = 15,000

Total persons = 75,000

(b) 250,000 acres by bullocks

(i) 30 acres per family

Total families required = 8,300

Total persons = 41,500

Grand total of persons		
	(a)	75,000
	(b)	41,500
		116,500

or:-

(ii) 20 acres per family

Total families		= 12,500
Total persons		= 62,500
Grand total	(a)	75,000
	(b)	62,500
		137,500

NOTE: Ref. II (b) 8,300 pairs of bullocks will have to be found or in II (b2) 12,500 pairs.

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2nd SUPPOSITION - That 1,700,000 acres are culturable
96,000 acres left for roads, etc.

I. 1,700,000 acres culturable by tractors

20 families per 1,000 acres
Total families = 20 x 1,700 = 34,000
Total persons = 170,000

or:-

II. (a) 500,000 acres culturable by bullocks

(i) 30 acres per family
Total families 17,000
Total persons = 85,000

or:-

(ii) 20 acres per family
Total families = 25,000
Total persons = 125,000

(b) 1,200,000 acres by tractors

20 families per 1,000 acres
Total families = 20 x 1,200 = 24,000
Total persons 120,000

Grand total of persons

(a)	85,000	or	125,000
(b)	120,000	or	120,000
	205,000	or	245,000

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POSSIBILITIES OF SETTLING ARAB REFUGEES IN IRAQ

1. Resettlement on newly irrigated land

An outstanding opportunity for resettling considerable numbers of the Arab refugees will occur in Iraq when newly irrigated land begins to become available as a result of the great flood control and irrigation works which have been planned by the British Haigh Irrigation Commission. The flood control of water storage works which have been designed for the Euphrates are now being carried out and it is estimated that they will be completed in their first stage by 1951. The International Bank are now considering the possibility of making a loan for the completion of the project, whose total cost is estimated at £ 2 millions. (£ 300,000 in sterling and £/1,700,000 in local currency.) It is estimated that these works will make irrigation water available for some 750,000 acres. This could provide for the settlement of about 300,000 people. The construction of the irrigation works, i.e. the canals could now begin at any time and would take about a year.

The great works which have been planned for the Tigris have not yet been put in hand and it will probably be at least five years before newly irrigated land can be expected to become available as a result of these works.

A note summarizing the recommendations of the Haigh Irrigation Development Commission is attached at Annex A.

2. Short-term resettlement possibilities

His Majesty's Embassy at Baghdad and the British Middle East Office consider that it should be possible to resettle a certain number of refugees in Iraq outside the scope of the major irrigation plans. Projects which could be implemented fairly quickly might, it is considered, be worked out in connexion with (a) drainage schemes for salty land already irrigated (b) schemes for mechanized agriculture in the rain-fall zone in northern Iraq (in this area there are estimated to be 10 million acres of cultivable land while the total area at present cultivated is only about 1½ million acres); and (c) pump irrigation schemes on the upper Euphrates.

No investigation of such schemes has, however, so far been carried out and much initial survey work would have to be undertaken. Detailed suggestions are now awaited from the British Middle East Office. A major difficulty is likely to be the question of expropriating the present owners of the land covered by the schemes. It is moreover unlikely that the Iraqi Government will be able to finance either the local currency or the foreign currency costs of the schemes.

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ANNEX A

IRRIGATION DEVELOPMENT IN IRAQ.

I.

It will be recalled that Mr. F. F. Haigh was appointed by the Iraq Government early in 1946 as head of a British Irrigation Development Commission, which was to undertake a comprehensive survey of irrigation, water storage, flood control and land drainage possibilities, and draw up plans for construction works for the Iraq Government. The Commission has now completed a general survey of these possibilities, and drawn up detailed plans for the first stage of development, i.e. the construction of water storage works. The final report has yet to be written but a preliminary report has been presented by Mr. Haigh which describes the results of the Commission's investigations.

Irrigation Development Programme

2. The total area at present served by irrigation in Iraq is about 7,874,000 acres. The works proposed aim at extending this area by the addition of about 8 million acres. The total cost is estimated at £93.105 millions, divided as follows:-

Flood control and storage	£22.375 million
Irrigation development	£35.260 "
Drainage	£23.88 "
Power	£6.35 "
Navigation	£3.65
Total	£93.105 million

With a population of some 4½ millions Iraq is not at present overpopulated. Development of irrigation and power resources must therefore necessarily take place gradually, and in step with the growth of the population and the mechanization of agriculture. The Irrigation Commission considers that the full development outlined above is unlikely to be required before the end of the century. Spread out over this period, the cost would involve an average annual expenditure of about £2 million only. Meanwhile, the immediate needs are flood control, limited irrigation development and drainage in the old irrigated areas. On this basis the Commission has recommended a programme of works for the next ten years involving an expenditure of £24,200,000 or £2,420,000 per annum (See part II below). Work on the first stage of the Euphrates

project,

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project is already in hand. The Commission's recommendations for the Tigris have now been studied by the Consulting Engineers who have recommended an alternative combination of works which would be rather more expensive. Their recommendations are summarized in Part II below. When the Iraq Government has taken a decision as between these recommendations and those of Mr. Haigh, it is hoped that the first stage of the works will be put in hand without further delay.

Finance:

3. The Commission anticipated that a large proportion of the capital expenditure will be recovered from the increase in land values resulting from the works, and that revenue sufficient to make the various projects productive will be obtained. They have submitted detailed proposals to the Iraq Government for a taxation system to cover the cost of the works, involving the levying of taxes on urban property, irrigated land and the crops produced. Meanwhile the International Bank are considering the possibility of a loan to finance the cost of the first stages of the scheme, estimated as follows: -

Project	Period for Completion	Sterling cost	Dollar cost	Dinar cost
Completion of Habbaniyah project.	3 years	£300,000	-	ID.1,700,000
First Stage Wadi Tharthar project	5 years	£1,437,700	$6,483,200	ID.3,921,200
Gibraltar dam on Diyala	3 years	£1,256,000	$ 360,000	ID.1,288,000
Total		£2,993,700	$6,843,200	ID.6,909,200

The Bank are sending a technical mission to Iraq in June to study these projects.

4. Future of the Commission:

The Haigh Irrigation Commission is now being disbanded, although Mr. Haigh himself, with a nucleus of British engineers, is remaining in Iraq until after the visit of the International Bank Mission. It is hoped that the Iraqi Government will then agree to prolong Mr. Haigh's contract until early in 1950 in order to

enable

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enable him to write up and publish his conclusions in detail. It is also hoped that a Development Branch of the Irrigation Department will now be set up under a British Irrigation engineer whose functions would be: -

(a) To continue the work of the Commission in planning the construction of smaller storage works, distribution works, and land drainage, and
(b) To keep alive and interpret to the Iraq Government the work of the Commission.

II.

The British Irrigation Commission's latest report, dated the 20th December, 1948, may be summarized as follows:-

(1) Water Storage Works:

Euphrates

5. (a) The Commission has drawn up detailed plans and designs for the development of the existing flood control works at the Habbaniyah lake. This development should ensure flood control of the river and will provide water for the irrigation of about 1.6 million acres. The estimated cost of the works is £3,375,000. The work is planned to proceed in two stages, the first stage, which would cost £2.7 millions and would provide irrigation water for 750,000 acres, has already been put in hand and could, it is estimated, be completed in two years;

(b) Additional flood control and water storage can be provided by the construction of a reservoir utilizing the Abu Dibbis and Bahr-al-Milh depressions. This project has not yet been surveyed in detail but a preliminary investigation indicates that its cost will be about £2 million and that it will provide irrigation water for about 1,200,000 acres.

Tigris

6. A number of alternative projects and combination of projects for water storage on the Tigris have been examined. As a result, the Commission has now recommended to the Iraq Government

(c) that the Wadi Tharthar project should be developed as the main flood control and water storage reservoir for the Tigris. (see M.E. (O) (47)3, paragraph 5). This project, which can be carried out by stages, involves the construction of a barrage across the Tigris at Samarra and of long inlet and outlet channels. The first stage, which will provide for flood control only, is estimated to cost £7 million. The second stage will cost an additional £4½ million and, will provide irrigation

water

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water for about 2.7 million acres. It is considered that this project will alone ensure complete flood control of the Tigris and its tributaries except on rare occasions. The Commission recommends that, to make flood control complete and also to provide additional irrigation water, the Wadi Tharthar project would be supplemented by:

(d) A dam at the Gibraltar site on the Diyala. This project has been prepared in detail. It is estimated that it will cost £2,580,000: and will provide irrigation water for 1.2 million acres.

(e) A dam at Dokhan on the lesser Zab. Plans for this project are being drawn up. It is estimated that it will cost about £3 million, and will provide irrigation water for about 1.4 million acres.

(11) Irrigation Development.

7. In addition to the water storage works described above, the development of irrigation involves the construction of distribution works i.e. canals and their appertinent works. Detailed designs for these distribution works have not yet been prepared. In the absence of such designs the cost of these works which will provide for the irrigation of about 8 million acres, is roughly estimated as follows:

Euphrates extension:	£12.75	millions
Lesser Zab extensions:	£4.61	millions
The Ishaqi, Diyala and Nahrwan areas	£7.15	millions
Lower Tigris areas	£10.75	millions
T o t a l	£35.26	millions

(3) Drainage.

8. In Iraq, experience has shown that drainage is essential if the productivity of irrigated lands is to be maintained. Without it irrigated lands are liable to become saline or waterlogged. The Commission has, therefore, strongly recommended that all areas both of existing irrigation and new developments should be provided with an adequate drainage system. Several small drainage schemes have been worked out in detail and from these a gross rate has been calculated. The total cost is estimated as follows:-

Old irrigated area requiring drainage

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drainage 4. 21 million acres
£8. 16 millions.

New irrigated area: 8 million acres;
£15. 72 millions

Total £ 23. 88 millions

(4) Hydro-electric power:

9. The power development possibilities of the development scheme outlined in paragraph I above are small, since economical water storage requires low dams which result in little and expensive power. The equality of power which it is estimated can be produced at each site and the appropriate cost (including construction of power station, generating plant and transmission are as follows:

Sites	Power K.W.	Cost
Wadi Tharthar	38,000	£3,000,000
Gibraltar dam	15,000	£1,350,000
Dokhan dam	40,000	£2,000,000
Total	93,000	£6,350,000

(5) Navigation:

10. The Commission has recommended that certain small regulating works should be undertaken on the Lower Tigris in order to permit the maintenance of navigation at all times with the use of very little water. These works have not been worked out in detail. The total cost might be about £3.65 millions.

Plan at Works for the next ten years:

The Commission has recommended the following plan of works for the next ten years:

Storage works:	Cost
Completion of Habbaniyah project - stage I	£2 million
Completion of Wadi Tharthar project - stage I	£ 7 million

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Construction of Gibraltar dam on the Diyala	£2,580,000
Drainage in old areas: at a rate of £300,000 p. a.	£3,000,000
Irrigation Development:	£4,750,000
T o t a l	£19,330,000

Consulting Engineers' Report

12. The Iraq Government's Consulting Engineers, Messrs. Coode, Vaughan-Lee, Frank and Gwyther, have examined the Commission's recommendations for the Tigris in conjunction with Sir William Halcrow and Partners. They consider that there are strong technical objections to the use of the Wadi Tharthar depression for irrigation storage, since the high water levels involved would impose a heavy strain on the long length of embankment required and constitute a grave danger to Baghdad. They have therefore recommended that the Wadi Tharther project should be carried out for flood control only, and that a project, rejected by the Haigh Commission, for a dam on the Greater Zab at Beckhme should be undertaken for irrigation storage, at an estimated cost of £9 millions. This dam might be supplemented later by the construction of further dams on the Lesser Zab and the Diyala. Mr. Haigh has now written a further paper in which he endeavours to dispel the Consulting Engineers' fears about the development of the Wadi Tharthar, and it remains to be seen which opinion the Iraq Government will accept.

Meanwhile the Iraq Government has now instructed the Consulting Engineers to prepare detailed specifications for the first stage of the Wadi Tharthar works.

Middle East Secretariat,
Foreign Office,
18th May, 1949.

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